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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00
	COME-00	CTME-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	DS-00	EB-00
	EUR-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VCI-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00
	IO-00	L-00	CAC-00	M-00	VCIE-00	NRC-00	NSAE-00
	ISN-00	NSCE-00	OCS-00	OIC-00	OIG-00	OMB-00	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SCT-00	ISNE-00	SP-00	SS-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USSS-00	IIP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4858
INFO ALL CANADIAN POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
FBI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHDC PRIORITY

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D), B2

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 000147

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2016
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, PINR, PREL, PHUM, SY, CA
SUBJECT: CANADIAN GOVERNMENT REACHES LEGAL SETTLEMENT WITH
MAHER ARAR

REF: (A) 06 OTTAWA 03595 (B) 06 OTTAWA 02852

Classified By: POLMINCOUNS BRIAN FLORA FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d)

1. (C/NF) Summary: As anticipated, the Government of Canada (GOC) has settled on a compensation package with Maher Arar. Arar will get some C\$10.5 million (US\$8.9 million), the highest compensation settlement in Canadian history. In a move that highlighted the importance of this issue in Canada, the Prime Minister personally announced the settlement in the foyer of the House of Commons and read the text of the letter of apology to Arar.

B1

End

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(B), 1.4(D)
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 26 JAN 2022
DATE/CASE ID: 13 MAY 2009 200706444

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summary.

2. (U) On Friday, January 26th, Prime Minister Stephen Harper released a letter of apology he sent to Maher Arar and his family for any role Canadian officials may have played that led to the USG decision to deport him to Syria in September 2002, and for trying to discredit him upon his return to Canada in October 2003. He added that the GOC had accepted all 23 recommendations in the Arar Commission Report, had sent letters to the Syrian and the U.S. governments formally objecting to the (alleged) mistreatment of Mr. Arar, and that Canada has removed Arar from Canadian lookout lists; furthermore, Harper stated that he had requested that the United States amend its own records accordingly. Finally, he announced that the GOC had successfully completed the mediation process with Arar and compensated him in the amount of C\$10.5 million, plus legal costs, for this ordeal.

3. (U) The text of the letter follows: Dear Mr. Arar: On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to apologize to you, Monia Mazigh and your family for any role Canadian officials may have played in the terrible ordeal that all of you experienced in 2002 and 2003. Although these events occurred under the last government, please rest assured that this government will do everything in its power to ensure that the issues raised by Commissioner O'Connor are addressed. I trust that, having arrived at a negotiated settlement, we have ensured that fair compensation will be paid to you and your family. I sincerely hope that these words and actions will assist you and your family in your efforts to begin a new and hopeful chapter in your lives. Yours sincerely. End text.

4. (U) Harper took questions from the media afterwards that focused on the GOC's efforts to remove Arar from any U.S. watch lists. Harper's tenor was firm. He stressed that he would continue to try to convince American authorities to remove Arar from their watch lists and that Canada deserved the right to disagree with the United States when it had something substantial to disagree about. He added that he supported Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day's assertion that there was not sufficient information in the USG file on Arar that warranted him to stay on any USG watch list.

5. (U) Arar and his lawyer held a press conference

Q5. (U) Arar and his lawyer held a press conference afterwards. Arar accepted Harper's apology and expressed gratitude to Canadians who supported him through this process. Arar continued that the apology confirmed his innocence. He also stated that his life had not gone back to

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normal and that he was afraid to travel anywhere outside of Canada.

6. (U) Embassy Ottawa released the following statement after Harper,s announcement. Begin text: We respect and appreciate the Prime Minister,s remarks today and his clear description of Canada,s position on the Arar case. As the Prime Minister noted, this is a situation where our two countries will continue to disagree. Based upon requests from Canada, the information in this case has been reexamined by the appropriate U.S. agencies. After that thorough review, the United States Government informed Canada of its decision to keep Mr. Arar on a U.S. watch list. We are standing by that decision. We thank Canada for respecting the right and responsibility of the United States to protect our citizens just as we respect Canada,s right to do the same. We value our close cooperation with Canada on issues of national security. End text.

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8. (C/NF) The Arar Commission, in its first report released in September 2006, absolved Arar of any connection in terrorist activities and found no basis that he is a threat to the security of Canada.

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As a result, the public perception is that Arar is an entirely innocent Muslim-Canadian falsely accused of ties to terrorism by the RCMP and deported by the United States in its controversial rendition policy to countries that practice torture. Arar,s continued inclusion on USG security watch lists is consistently portrayed by

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those same groups as a continuing affront to him and a slight to Canada.

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